

To: Fleming, Sheila[fleming.sheila@epa.gov]
From: MacIntyre, Mark
Sent: Tue 6/7/2016 1:32:38 AM
Subject: Op-Ed

Now is the time to weigh in on EPA's plan to Clean Up the Lower Willamette

(513 words)

Cleanup of the Lower Willamette River is now in sight.

This week, after an intensive scientific effort to determine what type of pollution exists, where it exists, what risk it poses and how to reduce those risks, the EPA has released our “Proposed Plan” for cleaning up 10 miles of the lower Willamette River. The clock now starts on a two-month comment period, an opportunity for all who care about the river to tell us what we got right and what needs improvement before the plan is finalized late this year.

This is a significant milestone for Oregon. Whether you treasure the lower Willamette's spiritual, aesthetic, recreational or economic value, this is your river. We encourage everyone with a stake in the river to engage in this regional conversation about cleanup over the next two months.

We know there will be diverse opinions on the scope and cost of the cleanup. But we've worked very hard to strike the right balance to ensure that the work prescribed in our plan is practical, affordable and ultimately effective in reducing near and long-term risks to people, fish and wildlife.

Estimated to cost approximately \$750 million, the plan we're proposing is a big one, ranking among the largest river sediment cleanups in the nation.

Our plan calls for removing or capping contaminated sediment from the most polluted and toxic areas. Caps will be used to isolate contamination. In other areas of the river, cleaner sediments from upstream will reduce the levels of contamination over time.

As we developed our plan, we engaged and closely consulted with a coalition of public & private stakeholders, including the State, the City, the Lower Willamette Group -- which includes many of the industry and government entities responsible for doing the actual cleanup work -- six federally recognized tribes, the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group, state legislators, members of Congress, and a multitude of other city, county, state and federal agencies. But ultimately, our plan is driven by data and science and our duty under the Superfund law to provide a cleaner and safer river for the community.

It is no secret that legal and technical disagreements over the years delayed this process for far too long. But we're finally at a point where the public can see the scientific, engineering, public health and the economic considerations that we've been grappling with, and over the next two months, have a chance to weigh-in on our specific plan to move forward with cleaning up the river.

Over 50 years ago, it was clear to Governor Tom McCall that the Willamette -- the lifeblood of Portland -- needed to be protected for future generations. While the oft-hailed efforts to clean it up in the 60s and 70s stopped many of the ongoing insults, the previous century of dumping of our sewage and industrial waste means a lot of pollution still remains. And so does Governor McCall's idea that the people who rely on the Willamette deserve a river that can support future generations.

We look forward to hearing from you.

#

Mark A. MacIntyre

Senior Communications Officer

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 10

1200 Sixth Ave. Suite 900

Seattle, WA 98101

(desk) 206-553-7302

(cell) 206-369-7999

macintyre.mark@epa.gov

